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For Immediate Release

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Vermont Announces Availability of Disaster Unemployment Assistance for those Impacted by Tropical Storm Irene

Montpelier, VT ó Governor Peter Shumlin announced today that Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are available to help those Vermonters left without work as a result of tropical storm Irene.

President Obama and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) have declared the following counties as official disaster areas eligible for individual assistance: Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Orange, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor counties. Under this declaration, individuals living, working, or scheduled to work in those counties may be eligible for disaster unemployment benefits.

“Tropical storm Irene has brought unprecedented damage and devastation to our state and to many Vermonters. I am very grateful to the Obama Administration and FEMA for their assistance during this difficult time,” said Governor Shumlin. “Since the storm I have visited the communities impacted, and I am pleased that Vermonters may qualify for this assistance. We are dedicated to helping businesses reopen their doors and to supporting workers while they are unemployed as a result of this storm.”

“The flooding from Irene has resulted in temporary and permanent job loss in Vermont,” said Labor Commissioner Annie Noonan. “We encourage Vermonters who have experienced job loss relating to tropical storm Irene to explore their eligibility for this assistance.”

The disaster assistance period begins **August 27, 2011** and ends **March 3, 2012**. The filing deadline for individuals deemed eligible for assistance is **October 7, 2011**. The first payable week will be the week ending **September 3, 2011**. An individual must be continuously unemployed as a direct result of the disaster in order to continue to receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance. If eligible, he or she can collect benefits for the weeks during which they meet the necessary criteria. Individuals who experience temporary job loss as a result of the disaster and who do not qualify for State Unemployment Insurance Benefits, such as self-employed individuals, may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

An individual may qualify to receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance if:

- You were injured in the disaster and are unable to work, whether you are an employee or self-employed.
- Your workplace was damaged, destroyed, or you cannot work because of the disaster.
- Your transportation to work is not available.
- You cannot get to your job because you must travel through the impacted area where means of transportation are not available.
- You were about to begin working, but could not because of the disaster.
- You derived most of your income from areas affected by the disaster, and your business is down as a direct result of the disaster.

Please call the Vermont Department of Labor's Claim Assistance Line at 1-877-214-3330 if you are an unemployed worker or self-employed individual who lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in a county that has been declared a disaster area by the federal government.

For more information, please visit www.labor.vermont.gov.



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